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PATENT APPLICATION

of

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for a

DOUBLE -SIDED KEYBOARD FOR USE IN AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE

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DOUBLE-SIDED KEYBOARD FOR USE IN AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE

This is a Continuation-In-Part application of co-pending U.S. parent application Serial No. 09/702,539, entitled "Double-sided Keyboard Having Two Keyboards and One
5 Activation Mat", filed October 31, 2000 and assigned to the assignee of the present invention.

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to a keyboard in an electronic device and,
10 more particularly, to a double-sided keyboard having two keyboards, or two sets of individual keys, located on both sides of the keyboard for entering information into an electronic device.

Background of the Invention

15 Man-machine interaction, in terms of user input, is of utmost importance in portable communication devices. Splitting up one single keyboard into two or more sub-keyboards is one of the ways to improve the efficient use of a communication device. For example, in a Communicator, a phone keyboard can be used when the Communicator functions as a telephone, and another separate QWERTY keyboard can be used when the
20 Communicator is used for other functions. As portable communication devices become smaller and more compact, the available space and volume for two or more sub-keyboards becomes more limited.

It is desirable to provide a cost-effective method and apparatus for entering
information in an electronic device depending on the functions of the device.

Summary of the Invention

According to the first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a double-sided keyboard for entering information in an electronic device. The keyboard comprises:
a circuit board having a first side and an opposing second side;
30 a first plurality of keys adjacent to the first side;
a second plurality of keys adjacent to the second side; and

a plurality of electrically conductive members disposed on the first side of the circuit board so that when at least one of the keys is pressed, at least one electrically conductive member is operatively connected to the circuit board for providing a signal indicative of the information for use in the electronic device.

5 Preferably, the electrically conductive members comprise a plurality of dome-shaped segments for making electrical contact with the circuit board to activate the circuit board for providing the signals.

 Possibly, the dome-shaped segments are shared with the first and second plurality of keys such that each dome-shaped segment can be caused to make electrical contact
10 with the circuit board by either one of the first plurality of keys or one of the second plurality of keys.

 Alternatively, the electrically conductive members comprise a first plurality of dome-shaped segments for making electrical contact with the circuit board to activate the circuit board by pressing one of the first plurality of keys; and a second plurality of dome-
15 shaped segments for making electrical contact with the circuit board to activate the circuit board by pressing one of the second plurality of keys.

 Preferably, the first plurality of keys are capable of activating the circuit board only when the keyboard is oriented in a first direction, and the second plurality of keys are capable of activating the circuit board only when the keyboard is oriented in a second
20 direction different from the first direction.

 Preferably, the first plurality of keys are positioned above the circuit board when the keyboard is oriented in the first direction, and the second plurality of keys are positioned above the circuit board when the keyboard is oriented in the second direction.

 Possibly, the electronic device comprises a device body having a device connector
25 and the circuit board comprises a circuit connector for electrically connecting to the device connector for conveying the signal from the keyboard to the device body.

 Possibly, the circuit connector is removable from the device connector so as to allow the keyboard to be detached from the device body.

 According to the present invention, the electrically conductive members are
30 fixedly attached to the circuit board, or they are disposed on a mat disposed between the

first plurality of keys and the circuit board.

According to the present invention, the first plurality of keys are individually disposed or they are part of a keymat. Likewise, the second plurality of keys are individually disposed or they are part of a further keymat.

5 Preferably, the electrically conductive members comprise a plurality of dome-shaped segments for making electrical contact with the circuit board to activate the circuit board for providing the signal.

 According to the second aspect of the present invention, there is provided an electronic device including a device body having a body direction facing a user to allow
10 the user to enter information in the electronic device, the electronic device comprising:

 a device connector disposed on the device body; and

 a double-sided keyboard for entering the information, the keyboard having a first side and an opposing second side, the keyboard comprising:

 a circuit connector;

15 a circuit electrically connected to the circuit connector;

 a first user interface having a plurality of keys disposed on the first side of the keyboard;

 a plurality of dome-shaped segments disposed between the keys and the circuit, wherein when at least one of the keys is pressed, at least one of the dome-shaped segments is deformed, causing the first user interface to interact with the
20 circuit for providing signals indicative of the information;

 a second user interface disposed on the second side of the keyboard and capable of interacting with the circuit for providing the signals, wherein the circuit connector is electrically connected to the device connector for conveying the
25 signals from the keyboard to the device body when the keyboard is attached to the device body, and the keyboard can be attached to the device body either

 in a first position such that the first side is oriented in a direction substantially the same as the device direction so as to allow the user to enter the information via the first user interface, or

30 in a second position such that the second side is oriented in a direction

substantially the same as the device orientation so as to allow the user to enter the information via the second user interface.

Preferably, the second user interface comprises a plurality of further keys, and wherein the further keys cause the circuit to make contact with the dome-shaped segments for providing the signals when at least one of the further keys is pressed, and the dome-shaped segments are electrically conductive for causing the circuit to provide the signals when the deformed dome-shaped segment electrically contacts the circuit.

Alternatively, the second user interface comprises a touch surface which causes the circuit to provide the signals when pressure is asserted at a location of the touch surface.

Possibly, the dome-shaped segments are electrically non-conductive, and when at least one of the keys is pressed, the pressed key asserts the pressure to the touch surface through the deformed dome-shaped segment.

According to the third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a double-sided keyboard removably attached to an electronic device to allow a user to enter information in the electronic device, the keyboard comprising:

- a first side and an opposing second side;
- a circuit connector;
- a circuit electrically connected to the circuit connector;
- a first user interface having a plurality of keys disposed on the first side of the keyboard;
- a plurality of dome-shaped segments disposed between the keys and the circuit, wherein when at least one of the keys is pressed, at least one of the dome-shaped segments is deformed, causing the first user interface to interact with the circuit for providing signals indicative of the information;
- a second user interface different from the first user interface, disposed on the second side of the keyboard, and capable of interacting with the circuit for providing the signals, wherein the circuit connector is electrically connected to the device connector for conveying the signals from the keyboard to the device body when the keyboard is attached to the device body.

Preferably, the second user interface comprises a plurality of further keys, and wherein the further keys cause the circuit to make contact with the dome-shaped segments for providing the signals when at least one of the further keys is pressed. The dome-shaped segments are electrically conductive for causing the circuit to provide the signals when the deformed dome-shaped segment electrically contacts the circuit.

Alternatively, the second user interface comprises a touch surface, which causes the circuit to provide the signals when pressure is asserted at a location of the touch surface.

Possibly, the dome-shaped segments are electrically non-conductive. When at least one of the keys is pressed, the pressed key asserts the pressure to the touch surface through the deformed dome-shaped segment.

The present invention will become apparent upon reading the description taken in conjunction with Figures 1a to 10c.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1a is a diagrammatic representation illustrating a portable electronic device having a set of keys on its cover.

Figure 1b is a diagrammatic representation illustrating the same electronic device with the cover being opened to expose another set of keys.

Figure 2a is a diagrammatic representation illustrating a communication device having a set of keys on its cover.

Figure 2b is a diagrammatic representation illustrating the same communication device with the cover being opened to expose another set of keys.

Figure 3a is a cross sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard of the present invention, wherein the keys on both sides of the keyboard share the same activation devices in order to activate the circuit board.

Figure 3b is a cross-sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard, wherein the keys on the two sides of the keyboard use different activation devices to active the circuit board.

Figure 3c is a cross-sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard, wherein

some keys on both sides of the keyboard use the same activation devices but some keys use different activation devices to activate the circuit board.

Figure 3d is a cross-sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard of the present invention, wherein the keys on both sides of the keyboard share the same
5 activation devices in order to activate a connection area integrated into a keymat.

Figure 3e is a cross-sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard, wherein the keys on both sides of the keyboard use different activation devices to activate a connection area integrated into a keymat.

Figure 3f is a cross-sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard, wherein
10 some keys on both sides of the keyboard use the same activation devices but some keys use different activation devices to activate a connection area integrated into a keymat.

Figure 4a is a cross-sectional view illustrating two keys, which share a common activation device.

Figure 4b is a cross-sectional view illustrating the activation of the circuit board
15 by pressing the key on one side of the keyboard, wherein the keys on both sides share the same activation devices.

Figure 4c is a cross-sectional view illustrating the activation of the circuit board by pressing the key on the other side of the keyboard, wherein the keys on both sides share the same activation devices.

Figure 4d is a cross-sectional view illustrating the activation of the circuit board
20 by pressing a key on either side of the keyboard, wherein the keys on different sides use different activation devices.

Figure 5 is a schematic diagram illustrating the principle of activating the circuit board.

Figure 6a is a diagrammatic representation of an electronic device having a
25 switching mechanism to define a keyboard mode when the cover is closed.

Figure 6b is a diagrammatic representation of the same electronic device, as illustrated in Figure 6a, wherein the switching mechanism defines another keyboard mode when the cover is open.

Figure 6c is a diagrammatic representation of the same electronic device, as
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illustrated in Figure 6a, wherein a directional switch is used to further define the keyboard modes.

Figure 7a is a diagrammatic representation of an electronic device having a keyboard as an extended portion of the electronic device.

5 Figure 7b is a diagrammatic representation of another electronic device having a keyboard as an extended portion of the electronic device.

Figure 8a is a diagrammatic representation showing a removable keyboard having two different user interfaces, according to the present invention.

10 Figure 8b is a diagrammatic representation showing an electronic device having a device body for placing a removable keyboard, according to the present invention.

Figure 8c is a diagrammatic representation showing the electronic device having thereon the double-sided keyboard, according to the present invention.

Figure 8d is a diagrammatic representation showing the electronic device of Figure 8c, wherein a different user interface is used for entering information.

15 Figure 9a is a top view showing an electronic device having an exemplary user interface.

Figure 9b is a top view showing the electronic device of Figure 9a with a different user interface.

20 Figure 10a is a cross-sectional view showing yet another double-sided keyboard, according to the present invention.

Figure 10b is a cross-sectional view showing still another double-sided keyboard, according to the present invention.

Figure 10c is top view showing the electronic device of Figure 9a with yet another user interface.

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Detailed Description of the Invention

Figures 1a and 1b illustrate a portable electronic device **100**, such as a personal digital assistant, which has a device body **102** and a cover **104**. When the cover **104** is in a closed position, it exposes a set of first keys **12**, as shown in Figure 1a. When the cover **104** is in an open position, it exposes a different set of second keys **22**, as shown in Figure

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1b. The device body **102** has a display **106** to show information to the user. It is understood that the cover **104** is electrically connected to the device body **102** for allowing the keys **12** and **22** to provide signals to the device body **102** for use in the device **100**.

5 Figures 2a and 2b illustrate a communication device **110**, such as a communicator device, which includes a phone keyboard having a plurality of first keys **12**, and a larger keyboard, such as a QWERTY keyboard, having a plurality of second keys **22**. The communication device **110** has a display **122** to be used as a phone display when the cover **112** is in a closed position, as shown in Figure 2a. The communication device **110**
10 also has another display **124** on the device body **114** to be used when the cover **112** is an open position, as shown in Figure 2b. It is understood that the cover **112** is electrically connected to the device body **114** for allowing the keys **12** and **22** to provide signals to the device body **114** for use in the device **110**.

 As shown in Figures 1a to 2b, the first keys **12** and the second keys **22** are located
15 on different sides of the cover **112**. Preferably, the key functions of the first keys **12** are different from the key functions of the second keys **22**. For example, the first keys **12** include number keys 0 to 9, a star key (*), and a pound sign (#), and the second keys **22** include alphabetic keys. However, it is also possible that some or all of the first keys **12** have the same key functions as those of the corresponding second keys **22**.

20 Figures 3a – 3c are cross-sectional views of the double-sided keyboard **1** of the present invention. The double-sided keyboard **1** can be used on the cover **104** of the electronic device **100**, as shown in Figures 1a and 1b, or the cover **112** of the communication device **110**, as shown in Figures 2a and 2b. As shown in Figures 3a - 3c, the double-sided keyboard **1** includes a circuit board **50** having a first side **52** and an
25 opposing second side **54**. Preferably, the circuit board **50** is a flexible printed circuit board (PCB), printed wire board (PWB), or a flexible connector arrangement, having electrical connection pads **60** for reading the key input on the first side **52**. Flexible connector arrangements and electrical connection pads **60** are well known in the art and are not part of the present invention. On the first side **52** of the circuit board **50**, a
30 plurality of dome-shaped, electrically conductive pads **44**, is provided to make electrical

contact with the electrical connection pads 60 on the circuit board 50 so as to produce electrical signals. The dome-shaped, electrically conductive pads 44 can be individually and directly disposed on the circuit board 50, as shown in Figures 4a -4d. The individual pads 44 can be attached to the circuit board 50 with glues, tapes or by soldering, welding, or any other known attachment techniques. Alternatively, the electrically conductive pads 44 are produced on a dome-sheet or activation mat 40, as shown in Figure 3a - 3f. The first keys 12 and second keys 22 can be individually keys, which are not physically linked to each other. However, the first keys 12 can be physically linked to each other by a first keymat 10, which is placed on top of the activation mat 40, as shown in Figures 3a-3c. Likewise, the second keys can be physically linked to each other by a second keymat 20, which is placed below the activation mat 40, as shown in Figure 3a-3c. An actuator 30 is provided under each first key 12 so that when the first key 12 is pressed towards the circuit board 50, the corresponding dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pad 44 is depressed by the actuator 30, causing the contact pad 44 to make electrical contact with the corresponding electrical connection pad 60 (See Figure 4b, where the electrical connection pad is represented by terminals 62, 64). Optionally, a mat cover 72 is provided over the first keymat 10 to physically isolate one first key 12 from another. Likewise, when a second key 22 is pressed towards the circuit board 50, the dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pad 44 is depressed by a corresponding actuator 30, causing the contact pad 44 to make electrical contact with the corresponding electrical connection pad 60 (See Figure 4c, where the electrical connection pad is represented by terminals 62, 64). Moreover, a mat cover 74 is provided over the second keymat 20 to physically isolate one second key 22 from another. Preferably, one or both of the mat covers 72 and 74 can also serve as a mechanical support to the whole keyboard arrangement, especially if individually keys 12, 22 are used instead of the keymats 10 and 20.

Figure 3a shows a double-side keyboard 1, wherein the first keys 12 share the same dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pads 44 with the corresponding second keys 22. Figure 3b shows a double-sided keyboard 1, wherein the first keys 12 use different dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pads 44 from the second keys 22.

Figure 3c shows a double-sided keyboard 1, wherein some of the second keys 22 of the second keymat 20 share the same conductive pads 44 with the first keys 12 of the first keymat 10, and some of the second keys 22 use separate conductive pads 44.

Figures 3d – 3f are cross-sectional views of the double-sided keyboard 1' of the present invention. The double-sided keyboard 1' can be used on the cover 104 of the electronic device 100, as shown in Figures 1a and 1b, or the cover 112 of the communication device 110, as shown in Figures 2a and 2b. The double-sided keyboard 1' is essentially the same as the double-sided keyboard 1, as shown in Figures 3a – 3c, except that the electrical connection pad 60 (See Figure 4c, where the electrical connection pad is represented by terminals 62, 64) and the necessary connection circuitry are integrated to the second keymat 20'. Thus, the second keymat 20' also functions as a keyboard similar to the circuit board 50 as shown in Figures 3a – 3c.

Figures 4a to 4c are cross-sectional views illustrating the activation of the circuit board by pressing a first key 12 or a second key 22, wherein the keys on both sides of the keyboard share the same activation devices. For illustrative purposes, the connection pad 60 on the circuit board 50 is represented by two conductive terminals 62, 64 provided under each dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pad 44. It is preferred that a base support 32 is provided between the second key 22 and the circuit board 50 in the area around the terminals 62, 64. When the contact pad 44 is remote from the terminals 62, 64, as shown in Figure 4a, the terminals 62, 64 act like an open switch. When the first key 12 is pressed towards the circuit board 50 along a direction denoted by an arrow 92 from its original position shown in phantom, the actuator 30 depresses the dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pad 44 into contact with the terminals 62, 64, as shown in Figure 4b. The terminals 62, 64 act like a closed switch, wherein the terminals 62, 64 are electrically connected. Figure 4c shows that the terminals 62, 64 can also be electrically connected when the second key 22 is pressed toward the circuit board 50 along a direction denoted by an arrow 94 from its original position, shown in phantom. As shown in Figure 4c, as the second key 22 is pressed along the direction 94, the base support 32 distorts the flexible circuit board 50. The distorted circuit board 50, in turn, pushes the activation mat 40 towards the first keymat 10, depressing the dome-shaped, contact pad 44 into contact

with the terminals **62**, **64**.

Figure 4d illustrates the activation of the circuit board **50** by pressing either a first key **12** on the first keymat **10** or a second key **22** on the second keymat **20**, wherein the keys **12**, **22** use different contact pads **44**.

5 In order to physically isolate the action of one dome-shaped contact pad **44** from another, it is possible to provide a plurality of spacers **34**, as shown in Figures 4a - 4d.

Figure 5 is a schematic diagram illustrating the principle of activating the circuit board **50** involving the terminals **62**, **64**. As shown, the terminals **62**, **64** act like a switch, which can be closed with the electrically conductive contact **44**. For example, the
10 terminal **62** is connected to the electrical ground **G** and the terminal **64** is connected to an output terminal **O**, which is connected to a voltage source having a voltage level **V** through a resistor **R**. When the terminals **62**, **64** are not shorted by the contact **44**, the voltage at the output terminal **O** is equal to or slightly lower than **V**. However, when the terminals **62**, **64** are electrically connected to each other by the contact **44**, the output
15 terminal **O** is electrically grounded. Thus, when the contact **44** is caused to make contact with the terminals **62**, **64**, it provides a signal **130** indicative of the voltage change at the output terminal **O**.

It should be noted that the connector arrangement on the circuit board **50**, as shown in Figures 3a-3c and 4a-4d, is shared by both the first keymat **10** and the second
20 keymat **20**, but it is preferred that the key functions of the keymat **10** and the keymat **20** are not the same. Because the same activation mat **40**, or the like, can be pressed on either side thereof, the electronic circuitry in the electronic device that uses the keyboard **1** should be able to recognize which one of the keymats **10**, **12** is being used. As shown in Figure 6a, it is possible to install in the electronic device **100** a contact switch **130** which
25 is operatively connected to the cover **104** and the device body **102**. The switch **130** is operable at two different states (open and closed, for example) such that when the cover **104** is closed, as shown in Figures 1a and 6a, the keyboard **1** (Figures 3a - 4d) functions in accordance with the input from the first keys **12** of the first keymat **10**. However, when the cover **104** is open, as shown in Figures 1b and 6b, the keyboard **1** functions in
30 accordance with the input from second keys **22** of the second keymat **20**. It is well-known

that a mobile phone that has a phone cover uses an active flip or the like to connect and disconnect a phone call. A similar device can be used for the switch 130.

It is also possible to install on the cover 104 a device 132 similar to a tilt switch or a gravity-sensitive switch, as shown in Figures 6b and 6c, which can sense the direction of the cover 104 regarding the gravity. With such a switch, the keyboard 1 can function
5 differently when the first keymat 10 is facing upward as opposed to when the second keymat 20 is facing upward. It is possible to choose the active side by user selection.

If different detection areas are used for the first side and the second side, the pressed side and the key are clearly defined.

10 In Figures 1a, 1b, 6a – 6c, the double-sided keyboard 1 or 1' is implemented on a cover of an electronic device. It is possible that the double-sided keyboard 1 or 1' is a non-movable part of an electronic device 120 or 122, as shown in Figures 7a and 7b. As shown in Figure 7a, the double-sided keyboard is an extended portion 105 of the device body 102 of the electronic device 120, which includes a display 106. As shown in Figure
15 7b, the double-sided keyboard is an extended portion 105 of the device body 103 of the electronic device 122, which has two displays 106 and 107 corresponding to the keymats 10 and 12.

It should be noted that, as shown in Figures 4a -5, the dome-shaped contact pad 44 is electrically conductive so that when the contact pad 44 makes contact with the
20 terminals 62, 64, it electrically connects the terminals. However, it is not necessary for the contact pad 44 to be electrically conductive and for it to physically make contact with the terminals 62, 64 in order to activate the circuit board 50. For example, the contact pad 44 can be a poor electrical conductor, but it can cause a change in the capacitance between the terminals 62, 64 when it is in close proximity to the terminals 62, 64. This
25 capacitance change can, in turn, cause a frequency change in a signal or other electrical characteristics of the signal in the circuit board 50. The activation mat 40 can be made of a variety of materials. For example, it can be made of a non-conductive material and then made conductive by a flexible metal coating; it can be made from an inherently conductive polymer membrane such as polyacetylene, or it can be made of a polymer
30 matrix embedded with a conductive filler, such as carbon or other metallic particles. It is

also possible that only the underside of the dome-shaped contact pad **44** is made conductive by having a flexible, conductive epoxy adhesive provided thereon, while the rest of the activation mat **40** is electrically non-conductive. Furthermore, the resistor **R** in Figure 5 can be the same in all keys **12**, **22**, but it can be different in different keys.

5 The double-sided keyboard, according to the present invention, can be detached from the electronic device. As shown in Figure 8a, the double-side keyboard **200** has thereon two different user interfaces. The first user interface **210** includes a set of first keys **12** and the second user interface **220** includes a set of second keys **22**, so that when the keyboard **200** is attached to an electronic device **140**, as shown in Figures 8c-8d, it
10 turns the electronic device **140** into two different devices with different functions. The keyboard **200** also has a connector **202**, which is engaged with a connector **150** on the electronic device **140**, as shown in Figure 8b, for conveying signals indicative of information entered by a user using the keys **12** or **22**. As shown in Figure 8b, the electronic device **140** has a device body **142**, which has mounting grooves **152** to secure
15 the keyboard **200** when the keyboard is attached to the device body **140**. The device body **142** has an upper side **144** facing the user when the user enters information in the electronic device **140**. When the keyboard **200** is attached to the device body **142**, either the first user interface **210** is exposed on the upper side **144** of the device body **142**, as shown in Figure 8c, or the second user interface **220** is exposed on the upper side **144**, as
20 shown in Figure 8d. It is possible that the electronic device **140** has a display **106** to show information to the user, and a set of common keys **146**, which can be used for entering information or for controlling the electronic device **140** regardless of which user interface **210**, **220** is exposed.

 Figures 9a shows an exemplary layout of the user interface **210**, which can be used
25 as a phone keypad. Figure 9b shows an exemplary layout of the user interface **220**, which can be used as a keypad for playing electronic games on the electronic device **140**. Not only can the user change the keypad of a particular keyboard by switching the sides of the keyboard, the user can user another keyboard on the same electronic device **140** as well. Thus, the double-sided keyboard **200** is used as an insert or an accessory to the device
30 body **142** to change the functions of the electronic device **140**. For example, the user can

insert another double-sided keyboard **300**, as shown in Figures 10a and 10b, onto the same device body **142**. As shown in Figures 10a and 10b, the double-sided keyboard **300** has a plurality of keys **12** on one side and a touch pad **310** on the other side. When the keyboard **300** is inserted onto the device body **142** with the touch pad **310** exposed to the user, as shown in Figure 10c, the user can make drawings or control the electronic device **140'**.

The double-sided keyboard **300** comprises a dome-sheet or activation mat **40** and a circuit board **50** between the keys **12** and the touch pad **310**, as shown in Figure 10a. The touch pad **310** can be made of an EMFI film (electromechanical film), for example, to allow the user to enter information in the electronic device **140'**. As it is known, an electromechanical film is a biaxially oriented plastic film containing a permanent electrical charge. When the film is deflected by touching, it produces an electrical signal. Thus, with electrodes disposed on the film surfaces to convey electrical signals to a connector, the electromechanical film can be used as a touch sensor. As with the keyboard **200**, as shown in Figures 3a-4c, the user can press one or more keys **12** to cause the corresponding electrically conductive sections **44** to make electrical contact with the circuit board **50** in order to enter information in the electronic device **140'**. The user can also enter information in the electronic device **140'** by using a finger, a pen or a stylus to assert pressure on different locations on the touch pad **310**. It is understood that the electrodes (not shown) on the touch pad are connected to a connector **202** (Figures 8a) for providing touch pad signals to the device body **142** (Figure 8b).

Alternatively, the dome-sheet **40** is not actually for making electrical contact with a circuit board in the double-sided keyboard. As shown in Figure 10b, the dome sheet **40'** can be made of an electrically non-conductive material just to give a tactile feel when the user presses the keys **12**. The actual sensing of the pressing of the keys **12** is carried out by the touch pad **310**. The touch pad **310** in Figure 10b detects the pressure on either side of the touch pad: the pressure on one side is asserted directly by a finger or a pen as with the touch pad in Figure 10a, whereas the pressure on the other side is asserted by the pressing of the keys **12**.

It is also possible to replace the circuit board **50**, as shown in Figures 3a-4c, with a

touch pad 310. Furthermore, the connector 202 of the keyboard 200 and the connector 150 on the device body 142 (Figures 8a and 8b) can be a serial interface with a small number of pins symmetrically arranged so that the keyboard 200 can fit both ways to the device body 142. A processor (not shown) in the device body 142 can recognize whether the first user interface 210 or the second user interface 220 is exposed for information entering. It is also possible to use a resistive strip on the keyboard 200 and a number of pins on the device body 142 to input data from the keyboard 200 to the device body 142. The present invention uses active domes 44 (electrically conducting) or passive domes (electrically non-conducting) to facilitate information entering using a double-sided keyboard 200, 300. The conveying of entered information from a removable keyboard 300 to a device body 142 can be carried out by connectors, resistive strips or any other means. No particular method of conveying information is preferred.

Thus, although the invention has been described with respect to a preferred embodiment thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the foregoing and various other changes, omissions and deviations in the form and detail thereof may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of this invention.